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## Missouri National Guard names new top enlisted Airman

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JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri National Guard has selected a new state command chief master sergeant to serve as the senior enlisted Airman for the Missouri Air National Guard.

Chief Master Sgt. Laura L. Clark, of O’Fallon, was selected from a pool of applicants from across the state, said Maj. Gen. Stephen L. Danner, adjutant general of the Missouri National Guard.

“It was a tough decision because of some very well-qualified applicants, but we are confident Chief Master Sgt. Clark will do an outstanding job as our state command chief,” Danner said. “She brings a wealth of experience to the position and a distinguished career in security forces.”

Clark, the Missouri Air National Guard’s first female state command chief, has big goals for the position.

“In addition to implementing the adjutant general’s strategic plan across the Missouri Air National Guard, my main goal is to focus on the individual Airman,” Clark said. “We need to focus on areas like health and fitness, employment, education, recruiting and retention. I want to make sure our Airmen know about the Patriot Center resources available at headquarters to help them in these areas.”

“During the past 10 years, the Air National Guard has seen a major increase in missions and deployment,” Clark said. Clark served three years on active duty following 9/11, supporting Operation Noble Eagle, ensuring the safety and security of Lambert Field. She has also deployed to Saudi Arabia’s Prince Sultan Air Base to support Operations Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch.

“With twenty-three-plus years of security forces experience, I believe I can relate to the Airmen,” Clark said. “I’ve been deployed and worked shift hours both stateside and overseas, under varying conditions. I understand what they are going through.”

Clark will also stress the importance of working together with the Missouri Army National Guard.

“It is very important that we work collaboratively with the Army National Guard,” Clark said. “We want to integrate units, training and fitness programs, and conferences where appropriate. We need to make sure we’re sharing information and leveraging lessons learned so we don’t end up reinventing the wheel over and over again.”

In 2007 she was named First Sergeant of the Year for the 131st Fighter Wing and in 2008 was named First Sergeant of the Year for the Missouri Air National Guard.



Before being named state command chief, Clark served as the 131st Bomb Wing's security forces manager. She was considering retirement before that, but said she received encouragement from her commander, Capt. Shane Rowe to continue her military career.

"I was ready to retire as a first sergeant, but Capt. Rowe encouraged me to compete for an open chief master sergeant position," Clark said. "He knew that a potential aspiration of mine was in becoming a command chief and consistently supported and challenged me to pursue my dreams."

Clark's potential was recognized at the top of the 131st as well. Col. Gregory Champagne, Commander of the 131st Bomb Wing, recommended Clark for the position.

"Chief Master Sgt. Clark has earned the respect of her peers, commanders and enlisted personnel by always making them her top priority," Champagne said. "Her professionalism, work ethic, creativity and friendly demeanor are what have earned her my admiration over the years. With her high energy, determination and ability to make things happen, she is one of the most selfless and inspiring team players I have ever worked with."

Additionally, she is a standout Airman, consistently scoring 'excellent' on her Air Force fitness tests.

Clark is replacing current state command chief, Command Chief Master Sgt. William Phillips. Phillips has served in the position since 2007.

"I'm honored," Clark said. "I'm humbled. I give a lot of credit to the state command chiefs that came before me. I want to carry on their legacy and build on the foundations that they've already created."

Clark received her Bachelor of Science degree in Education at Wayland Baptist University in 1996. She plans to pursue a master of arts in management and leadership at Webster University.

In her civilian career, Clark works in Compliance and Risk Management for cardholder solutions at MasterCard Worldwide in O'Fallon.

She is also very active in her community. She is a member at Sunrise Methodist Church in O'Fallon, and volunteers for numerous organizations including: Komen Race for the Cure, the Salvation Army's Adopt a Family Program, Operation Food Search, Habitat for Humanity and Standup2cancer.

"As a leader, it's important to help develop the whole Airman," Clark said. "I believe some form of community service, whether it's through volunteer organizations, a church, or coaching a T-ball team, et cetera makes us better Airmen."

Clark's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device, three Oak Leaf Clusters; Air Force Good Conduct Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters; National Defense Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Air Force Overseas Short; Air Force Longevity Service with two Oak Leaf Clusters; and Armed Forces Reserve Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster.



Clark is supported in her military career by her mother, Deborah Clark, of O'Fallon, her father, Charles Price, of Omaha, Neb., her son, Dylan, of O'Fallon, and her significant other, Stefan Mundt, of St. Peters.

For more information about the Missouri National Guard, please visit [www.moguard.com](http://www.moguard.com) and our social media sites: [www.facebook.com/Missouri.National.Guard](https://www.facebook.com/Missouri.National.Guard); [www.twitter.com/Missouri\\_NG](https://www.twitter.com/Missouri_NG); [www.youtube.com/MoNationalGuard](https://www.youtube.com/MoNationalGuard); [www.myspace.com/missouri\\_ng](https://www.myspace.com/missouri_ng); [www.flickr.com/photos/missouriguard](https://www.flickr.com/photos/missouriguard); [www.moguard.com/blog](http://www.moguard.com/blog)